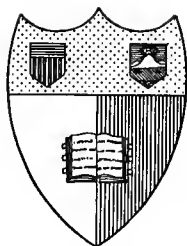


Seekers After God

Wm. Preston Johnston

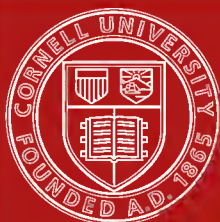


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SEEKERS AFTER GOD

Sonnets

BY

WM. PRESTON JOHNSTON



LOUISVILLE, KY.

JOHN P. MORTON & COMPANY

1898

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Dedication.

TO MISS HENRIETTA PRESTON JOHNSTON.

*In this small book I seek the sonnet's aid,
Some pictures of the past in words to paint
And show how seekers after God essayed
To find him ; patriarch and martyred saint
And spotless sage free from all selfish taint
And Christian knight and missionary mild,
And how heaven answers to the heart's wild plaint,
And wisdom cometh to the little child.*

*But none of those whom I on earth have known
Have sought God's will with a more strenuous quest,
With eager prayer and thought of Him alone
And anxious wish to do his least behest
Than thou, my sister, earliest, dearest friend,
To whom these autumn leaves with love I send.*

Part First.
Seekers After God.
Sonnets.

SEEKERS AFTER GOD.



PROLOGUE.

I.

THE bard who would the storied past rehearse,
What things the spirit wrought in word and deed,
Should strike a note unerring in his verse,
A cypher give that he who runs may read.
How answers then the sonnet to his need,
Its metre strained, its tangled sleeve of rhyme,
The structural artifice true art must heed
Where stringent form and soaring thought should chime?
Art hath its phases ; now it stands sublime
In Milton's marvellous imaginings ;
Dryden's sonorous line stales not with time ;
In woodnotes wild the Ayrshire ploughman sings :
So none need scorn the pipe as small for fame
By Petrarch blown and Browning's gentle dame.

Seekers After God.

II.

I LEAVE the trumpet and full throated horn
Of epic to the leaders of the choir,
The martial strain, the sigh of love forlorn,
To him who smites the loud resounding lyre
And chants with lips touched by the sacred fire
Imperial themes of patriot fervor born,
The joy of combat and the noble ire
That withers wrong with fierce consuming fire.

My task, to show the patriarchs of the eld
And seekers after God by nature's light
And saints who witnessed truth in suffering;
Small pictures of the past by faith beheld,
That grants dim eyes a sacred second sight;
These in the sonnet's narrow bounds I sing.

Prologue.

III.

THE search of man for God, the mightiest theme
That ever can his loftiest thought engage!
Is his clear vision but an idle dream,
The mind's mirage to lure the doubting sage
With phantom waters that can not assuage
His thirst divine, or are the spires that gleam
Above Heaven's battlements from age to age
To eyes unsealed, as real as they seem?

To him who sees them not, they are not; clod
Of crudest clay by spirit uninformed,
His body, breath and reason have their day
And into nothingness would pass away,
But that, by grace regenerate and warmed
To a new being, he may grope toward God.

The Windows of Heaven.

THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN.



REASON.

THE budding world was in its bloomstrewn prime,
And from it Nature rose, a temple vast ;
Its architects, twin Titans, Space and Time,
Rested, their handiwork complete, when last
Into the pageant a new Being passed,
The one appointed in the splendid shrine
High priest, o'er all his sovereign sway to cast
And fill the void with energy divine.
For all the beams from stars, moon, sun, that shine
Could not from Nature lift the dreary pall
Till on man's brow was set the imperial sign
Of the self-conscious soul that saw it all
In the clear light of reason, which to men
Came through the window opened from Heaven then.

Seekers After God.

OBEDIENCE.

THE mighty temple of the human soul,
Lit through one only casement by a ray
Of natural reason, saw long ages roll
While mankind mouldered to a slow decay,
Because they yielded not to reason's sway,
But let false fiends crawl to the niches high
And foul forms squat in places where men pray;
So that 'twere best this race corrupt should die.
But no! man hath a loftier destiny;
Knowledge gives light, but from the sloughs of sense
In vain the struggling soul essays to fly
Unless obedience leads the spirit hence.
Another window's radiance through the gloom
To Noah showed man's path from death and doom.

The Windows of Heaven.

FAITH.

FROM the broad plains where wandering herdsmen dwelt,
A Prince of Ur — men call him now a sheikh —
Of the colossal type, severe, antique,
Led off his bands. The Lord had kindly dealt
With him and his; his grateful spirit felt
The trust a son unto his father feels
As in his boyhood at that knee he kneels,
While all his fervent love and passions melt
Into a faith, unquenchable, supreme.
In God he trusts; from Heaven's high battlement
A blaze of glory fills his horsehair tent
And rolling splendors o'er his spirit stream;
His vision pierces Nature's lofty dome
And treads the fields where guardian angels roam.

Seekers After God.

THE LAW.

FROM Egypt's teeming fields the Hebrews fled,
Passed the deep waters, tracked the desert sand,
Following his steps where'er the Seer led,
And to the Mountain came, an altar grand,
Reared in the waste by an Almighty hand,
That here Earth's self should smoke, and flames arise,
While royal Moses as High Priest should stand,
The tables twain to take, and sacrifice.
Then came the Law amid a nation's cries
Of fear and mad revolt from God's command
And lurid light that, issuing from the skies,
Made all the Earth, at last, a Holy Land;
Commandments forged to fetter men from wrong
But wrought by righteousness to weapons strong.

The Windows of Heaven.

INSPIRATION.

SPIRIT Divine that o'er creation broods,
Filling with life the outer bounds of space
And thrilling further yet the amplitudes
Beyond the finite ken, Thou hast by grace
From Thy pure essence lent a spark, a trace,
Of Deity, in those benignant moods
Wherein the Infinite reveals His face
To holy men, but still their grasp eludes.

And thus to David's heaven-strung harp there came
Music that matched the worship of his song,
Remorse and penitence and words of flame ;
And prophets spake with inspiration strong.
Before their eyes ages to come unroll,
And fire-touched lips recite the seraphs' scroll.

At the Barriers.

AT THE BARRIERS.



PYTHAGORAS.

GOING down through the valley of Hades,
The immemorial dim dusk of the eld,
Of my daemon I ask whose grand shade is
That presence majestic, that form unexcelled ;
And then by emotions prepotent impelled,
I say, as the hem of his raiment I touch,
“Dear Master, if thou hast in silence withheld
Some part of thy wisdom, of which thou hast much,
Teach me, I pray thee, in aid of mankind.”
Pythagoras answered, “*One* thing is sure ;
Man is deaf to the rhythm of nature, and blind
To its order. Physician, this thought is his cure ;
That Kosmos is justly and wisely designed,
And its harmony sounds in the ears of the pure.”

Seekers After God.

SOCRATES.

I.

IN early Hellas, clear as crystal wave
In sky, in atmosphere, in minds of men,
Whether in frolic sport or discourse grave
Its thought ran riot, or beyond the ken
Of worshippers of idols of the den
Lifted its haughty head to probe the vault
And from Olympus force reply again,
The strong winged soul found in its flight no halt,
But to the empyreal sphere soared in assault.
So Socrates through myth and mystery saw,
And Plato strove the Idea to exalt
That veiled the Maker in unchanging Law;
Seekers for truth, in which for God they sought
And won the crown for which their souls had wrought.

At the Barriers.

SOCRATES.

II.

WHEN Socrates, he of the shabby robe,
Had earned from Athens the unjust decree
That sentenced him to death, because his probe
Had touched its self love, Pity said, "Go free,
Thy prison gates to-night unbarred shall be ;
Walk forth, and in some happier clime thy fame
Will blossom yet to immortality,
Nor can detraction visit thee with blame."
"Nay, friends, have I not told you that there came
Unto mine inmost soul a potent voice
That bade me put all false conceit to shame
And place the common welfare first ; no choice
Is left. For me the hemlock cup to take
Is better far than Athens' laws to break."

Seekers After God.

SOCRATES.

III.

A THREADBARE cloak, alas, a tattered sleeve,
A smile ironical, a biting tongue,
The honied sarcasm of a bee that stung,
The arguments that puzzle and deceive,
The snares his crafty questions interweave !
And yet, O Socrates, how wise men hung
Upon thy words, those precious jewels flung
Unto a swinish multitude ; it grieves
Our very souls that Plato's garnered sheaves
And worthy Xenophon's small talk is all
That from the buried past we can recall ;
Small remnant of thy legacy it leaves.
One saying stays ; that thou wouldst gladly die
To share with just men immortality.

At the Barriers.

SCIPIO.

THESE ceremonial forms and ancient rites,
These solemn auguries by seers made,
The sign that bodes, the portent that affrights,
The ghost of which the soldier is afraid,
The pomp of superstition's masquerade
Are passing dreams to Scipio, who delights
To climb with Plato the aerial grade
Of thought where calm Philosophy invites.
Conqueror of Carthage, there are loftier heights
To which thy soul shall rise; the captive maid
Free from all fear, the victory that excites
Nor wrath nor greed, these laurels shall not fade.
Thy clement soul in search of truth shall see
Three golden steps, to know, to do, to be.

Seekers After God.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

THE foremost man of all the world ! Is't true ?
His was a mind that grasped the whole of life,
That gazed with equal brow on calm and strife,
Gleaned what the past bequeathed, yet seized the new,
And saw the ages march in grand review.
The stern republic of an earlier day,
Rent into fragments, mouldering to decay,
Still felt the thirst to combat and subdue,
The instinct fierce the old paths to pursue
Which led to conquest and imperial sway.
This Cæsar saw ; and though his pathway lay
Across the muniments of time, he drew
Into his sovereign hand all that was old
And bade a new world from the germs unfold.

At the Barriers.

CICERO.

WHEN martial Rome had stretched her
conquering sword
Wide o'er the lands, Philosophy held sway
Where once ancestral gods had been adored.
Then rival sects made battle in word-play ;
Stoic and Epicurean had his say,
And in the clash of tongues each felt assured
That he alone stood in the light of day.
Great Tully looked on, smiling, and endured
The babble till his patience was outworn,
Then, with full measure of his talents ten
And mental sinews trained in every school
And learning copious as rich Plenty's horn,
He grasped the problem old 'twixt gods and men,
To find in nature that one God must rule.

Seekers After God.

SENECA.

FAVORITE of fortune, Seneca the wise,
 Offspring of intellect and virtuous thought,
Possessing all things that men seek or prize,
Desiring most the things that good men ought,
And loving well the truths himself had taught ;
Yet by the cruel irony of fate
Condemned to wear as chains what most men sought,
Rank, ease, power, wealth, the favor of the great,
He kept his steadfast eyes on virtue's gate,
But dared not enter it beyond retreat ;
For, crouching near, envy and lynx-eyed hate
And murder foul watched his advancing feet.
His nerveless hand to cope with evil tried,
But lacking strength greatly to live,—he died.

At the Barriers.

EPICTETUS.

SLAVE of the slave of that still baser slave,
Who, having all things, worshipped self alone,
Nero, in whose foul breast, as in a grave,
Festered all infamies born of a throne,
One Epictetus, a poor cripple shone
Upon a darkened world as shines a star
Through a dim, clouded dawn, and, to the moan
Of human pain that welled up near and far,
Pointed in silence to his scourge and scar,
Or spoke to fainting hearts, "Who would be strong,—
Balm for the sores of peace, the wounds of war—
Must learn to suffer and to do no wrong."
His words, his life, to men a lesson gave
That made Aurelius pattern on the slave.

Seekers After God.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

VICTORIOUS Rome had crystallized the world
Into an empire, and her Genius stood
In one man lodged until his brain was whirled
With madness and untrammelled masterhood ;
And evil sat enthroned, nor any could
Stem or withstand corruption's poisonous tide,
So that belief, that aught of true or good
On earth remained, in human hearts had died,
But that, imperial power, thus deified,
Came to a youth, self centred, truly great,
Who made a chaste philosophy the bride
Of his exalted reason, and the state
His only care, but yet in twilight groped,
While slaves attained what Marcus only hoped.

The Eyes Unsealed.



Disciples of the Lord.

THE EYES UNSEALED.



A VOICE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS.

A VOICE! A Voice—and is it but a voice
That from the wilderness sends up a cry?
“God’s Kingdom is at hand; your only choice,
O wretched! is to turn from sin or die.
Bring forth good fruits; the poor man’s needs supply;
Be just, be merciful. Behold the Lord,
Whose rule shall spread unto eternity!
A prophet I? Nay, but a Voice! The Word
That Was and Is comes like a seraph’s sword
To bend brute force to the free spirit’s sway,
Where’er His tidings glad by men are heard;
But John’s faint echoes shall soon die away.”
Not so, O greater than a prophet, thou
From Herod’s dungeon rose and livest now!

Seekers After God.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

WHAT went ye to the wilderness to see?
Was it a reed shaken by the desert wind?
But wherefore went ye? Hoping what to find?
A man clothed in soft raiment? Nay, but he,
Who dares to beard the haughty Pharisee,
In camel's hair and leathern girdle clad,
Brings contrite hearts the gospel that makes glad,
And warns the wicked Heaven's wrath to flee;
For One will come whose fan is in His hand
To gather in His wheat and purge the floor.
John is His herald; none has gone before
Of woman born whose name shall greater stand;
But yet unto the very least in Heaven
A higher place than unto John is given.

The Eyes Unsealed.

SIMON BAR-JONA.

BARE-KNEED he waded in the reedy lake,
Or pushed his scallop further from the shore,
Or hoisted sail where rougher waters break,
With stalwart arms that plied the bladed oar
And shoulders galled with the huge loads they bore.
But still beneath their pent house gleamed dark eyes
With lambent fire, and his stern visage wore
The signs of thought that spreads its wings and flies.

But why to him should come the glad surprise?
Why should he be Messiah's chosen friend,—
This fisherman of bleak Gennesaret—
Bidden henceforth for men to cast his net?
The Lord whose kingdom comes and knows no end
Discerns His own through nature's thin disguise.

Seekers After God.

PETER THE CONFESSOR.

THE Twelve, and The One, they were thirteen in all,
Were wearily walking a summer's day
The road to the Roman city whose wall
Loomed by the coast. They were seeking the Way
To eternal life, and they halted to pray.
Then Jesus asked of the Twelve, by what name
The people spake of him; whom did they say
The Son of Man was. They answered, "His fame
Was that of a prophet, Elijah or John."
"But whom say *ye*, that I am?" said the Lord.
Simon answered, "The Christ! Thou art the Son
Of the Living God." Then Jesus, "That Word
Is the rock I build on. Thou, Peter, art blest
That my Father hath shown thee what thou hast confessed."

The Eyes Unsealed.

PETER THE DENIER.

THE King of Glory took the cup of shame
And pressed it to his lips. By one betrayed,
All the Apostles, who had in His Name
Wrought miracles, fled from him sore afraid.
But Peter followed, though afar, and stayed
Outside the throng and yet within the court,
Dazed with tumultuous terrors, when a maid
Spied him, and cried, "Thou, too, make thy report,
Thou Nazarene!" He cursed, yea, he denied
With oaths that he was of them, or even knew
The Man of Sorrows shortly to be tried,
Thus thrice e'er dawn; and when the cock twice crew,
He was aware and wept. O human heart,
How strong, how weak, how wonderful thou art!

Seekers After God.

PETER AFTER PENTECOST.

WHERE late ye fled a flock of fugitives,
Scattered like sheep before a ravening beast,
Because your Christ was dead, now that He lives
And ye have seen Him, all your fears have ceased,
Nor Herod, Pilate, Sanhedrim or priest
Can awe you any more ; for Pentecost
Hath signed your brows with flame, and so increased
Your zeal for Christ that each man is a host,
Eager to meet what other men fear most
And what the rest desire esteeming least ;
So Peter, who denied, again can boast
That death is welcome as a marriage feast.
Transformed by grace, no more his soul shall quail,
Nor 'gainst the Rock the gates of Hell prevail.

The Eyes Unsealed.

SAUL OF TARSUS.

I.

THE Chief Priest asked, "What man shall have command
And journey to Damascus to hale thence
The wretched Nazarenes who fret the land
With lies about their false Christ, an offense
Deserving death. We need intelligence,
Courage and fiery zeal that will withstand
Pity, prayer, argument ; a man intense,
Fierce for the Law, and with an iron hand."
A scribe replied, "The man to lead your band
Is Saul of Tarsus, by all men confessed
Vehement in faith, without fear, and grand
In hate of error ; he will cure the pest."
Saul, breathing slaughter, was for havock sent ;
The Scourge of God came back a penitent.

Seekers After God.

SAUL OF TARSUS.

II.

WHAT haughty horseman rides the dusty road
That to Damascus leads? It is the Jew
Who at Gamaliel's feet so long abode
And all the learning of the ancients knew.
A Pharisee of Pharisees, he grew
Wise in the law of Moses, Israel's code,
And inspiration from the prophets drew,
Bending his shoulders to the Talmud's load;
So that to him all streams of influence flowed,
To fill his soul with wrath against the crew
Of recreant Hebrews who sedition sowed,
And stir his zeal their schism to subdue.
To shield the Covenant with his stubborn will
Was Saul's large purpose; God's was larger still.

The Eyes Unsealed.

PAUL.

PROUD SAUL, on bigotry's harsh mission bound,
With rancor filled, across the sultry plain
Toward green Damascus shook his bridle rein,
When lo, a sudden glory shone around,
And stricken with blindness, prostrate to the ground
He fell, with all his band. O Paul, in vain
Didst thou consent to witness Stephen slain;
Almighty power can human plans confound.
Thy learning, zeal and heart brave, clean and sound,
The Lord had need of; so that thou didst gain
Through blindness sight, the right to suffer pain,
And at the last with martyrdom be crowned.
The Voice that spake to thee gave thee a voice
That bade the Gentile world in Christ rejoice.

Seekers After God.

JOHN THE SEER.

O FOR the vision of glory that broke
On the soul of the saint, apostle of love,
Who hung on the Master's lips when he spoke,
And beheld the Spirit in shape like a dove
Descend on his Lord, and heard from above
The voice that called Him His Son, and awoke
To the fact—the great fact—the centuries prove,
That matter serves Spirit as symbol and cloak!
His eyes were unsealed through love for the friend
Who had chastened his zeal and pointed the way
To the realm of the Lamb and bliss without end,
The splendors of Zion and perpetual day.
Love was the key to those portals of love
That opened to earth the mansions above.

The Eyes Unsealed.

THE APOCALYPSE.

VISION on vision of glory supernal
Broke like wild billows on soul and on sight
Of the saint who, through time and aeons eternal
And realms beyond space, in spirit took flight.
Mountains delectable, streams of delight,
Oceans of crystal and islands elysian,
Cherubim, Seraphim, angels of might,
Bands of the blest bent on heavenly mission,
And Jesus Himself in glory resplendent,
The First and the Last, on jasper enthroned,
Star sceptered, supreme, with power transcendent,
In garments of pity, with righteousness zoned,
To John the Divine were on Patmos revealed
When the angel of God his eyes had unsealed.

Pilgrims of the Cross.

PILGRIMS OF THE CROSS.



TELEMACHUS.

The Martyr of the Amphitheatre.

THE Rome of Diocletian, steeped in blood
Of Christian martyrs, long had passed away,
And the new faith, like a great Alpine flood,
Above the empire's submerged levels lay,
And even the Cæsars owned Christ's gentle sway.
Yet in the Circus low browed thousands swarmed
To watch the gladiators' brutal fray
And cheered the onset and for victims stormed.

The games were set, the swordsmen stood arrayed,
When from the benches to the arena sprang
The monk Telemachus, beating down each blade;
Then the mob stoned him, while their fierce cries rang.
There the monk died, the sand stained with his gore;
Rome wept, and saw those bloody sports no more.

Seekers After God.

THE SAINT OF THE DESERT.

THE world is cruel, in the slough of sin,
And bad brute force tramples on Adam's seed ;
In the hot race of life the vilest win,
And power wrings tribute from the poor man's need ;
Then what is left is shared by craft and greed ;
Heaven hath no ear to hear amid the din,
Though lust corrupts and human hearts must bleed.
When will the reign of righteousness begin ?

Eager am I my trembling soul to save ;
O God, Thou knowest that I would be pure,
But man is cruel and I am not strong
To cope with savagery and combat wrong.
Still I can pray, shun sin and much endure,
Far from the world hid in some desert cave.

Pilgrims of the Cross.

THE KNIGHT ERRANT.

THE world is full of sin—a cruel world—
King Satan hath unbarred the gates of hell
And his foul cohorts of bad spirits hurled
To spread confusion and the discord swell.
These rave and ravin and strike the final knell
Of man on earth; millennium now draws near
And imminent war with the foul fiends who fell;
So timid souls creep palsied with base fear.

But why stand I braced with this stalwart brawn
And with a heart robust as solid oak,
But to make battle with the infernal spawn
And stand between them and God's common folk?
Therefore to God and man, whate'er my fate,
My sword, my strength, my life, I dedicate.

Seekers After God.

THE BENEDICTINE.

THE great world seethes ; men fight for gold or power,
And bloodstains redden castle, court and cot ;
Sin stalks abroad or shames the lady's bower ;
In vain we look to find the happy spot
Where righteousness prevails and sin is not.
The cloister only is a rock built tower
Against the woe which is the common lot,
The wretchedness that is our earthly dower.

Here in its sheltered walls I quiet find,
As peacefully I pace the shaded walk,
And list our stately abbot's wise, sweet talk,
Or join in psalmody with joyous mind ;
Or, that Christ's gospel some poor souls may reach,
What things I know I humbly, gladly teach.

Pilgrims of the Cross.

THE FRANCISCAN.

HAVE pity, dear Christ, on the sons of men,
Who grovel and starve in alleys and docks;
The wolf hath his lair, the bear hath his den
And conies hide in the holes of the rocks;
But the shelter of home is denied thy flocks
Who huddle and slink in the filth and mire
Of the sewers called cities, where misery mocks,
Whose sons pass to Moloch through torture and fire!
But I! What can I do? Jesu! I can cry,
“Dear Brother, come forth from the cesspool of sin,
The help of my hand, the throb of my heart
Are thine if thou wilt, rise up, do thy part.
Thou canst not? Thou shalt! One soul I will win
For the Lord who is deaf to no penitent’s sigh.”

Seekers After God.

COLUMBUS.

I.

WHAT seer can tell where mighty thoughts are born,
Or whence they come to men? The humble cot,
By which the proud pass with a glance of scorn,
In after days becomes a hallowed spot
Where pilgrim feet resort. The Fates allot
Unto Porphyrogene oblivion's pall;
Imperial grandeur is right soon forgot;
The grave's black bondage makes of wealth its thrall.

Columbus nurtured near the weaver's beam,
Where a sad sire the frequent shuttle threw,
Saw floods of light upon his spirit stream
And from Heaven's fountains living waters drew.
Through work and zeal the vision large unfurled
That gave mankind and him a second world.

Pilgrims of the Cross.

COLUMBUS.

II.

THOU art not yet a saint, or canonized,
In calendar of church, or men's esteem,
Grand Christopher! The things thy soul most prized,
The two worlds that made up thy life long dream
Are commonplace and trite, as men now deem ;
The young world that thy caravels explored
Beyond the ocean's verge and earth's extreme,
But most the sphere unseen wherein thy spirit soared.

But who among the sons of mortal men
Showed stouter heart in want, or storm, or fray,
Or fortitude the stings of fate to bear?
At each rebuff thine essay, made again
Through mirk and misdoubt, found at last a way,
And heaven made answer to thy toil and prayer!

Seekers After God.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA.

WHEN Pampeluna's walls in dust were laid,
Some stout defenders, still on fight intent,
Back to the citadel their footsteps bent ;
And there Loyola, tranquil, undismayed,
Still held the breach with his ensanguined blade,
Until he sank, with grievous wounds forspent.
Then on the couch of pain, with anguish rent,
To king and country his full debt was paid.

There to a higher life he felt the call,
And found the pattern of a perfect man
In Jesus ; and conceived the mighty plan
Of service in His Name that holds in thrall
The masterful and wise, and bends the will
Of thousands in its forceful bondage still.

Pilgrims of the Cross.

HUGH LATIMER.

BLUFF Latimer, brave, honest and robust,
Who cared not what the Court or courtiers thought,
But had a charge to keep, a sacred trust,
A mission and a work that must be wrought,
A battle with the Arch-fiend to be fought,
And met unblenched great Harry's awful frown—
Those bended brows with deadly purpose fraught—
Looking beyond to a thorn-twisted crown,
When at the stake the cruel flame's mad flight
Wreathed to an aureole round his reverend head,
To Ridley said, "Brother, this candle's light
Will over all the realm of England spread."
Thus persecution's baleful pyre became
Truth's dayspring and a Pentecostal flame.

Seekers After God.

JOHN WESLEY.

CENTURIES of form and dogma had o'erpast
Since Christ had shown men how to live and die,
And saints had come and gone, and now at last
Religion cloaked conventionality.
The world was sunk in sense — a living lie —
And England's easy ethics, futile thought,
Cast in a mould of smug gentility,
Deemed poor humanity a thing of naught.
But underneath that rotten thin veneer
Surged fires volcanic, born of human hate,
That wrecked the order and the idea old ;
So all seemed lost, but that Ithuriel's spear,
In Wesley's hand, unmasked the potentate
Of Hell, and warmed to life men's hearts grown cold.

Pilgrims of the Cross.

JAMES MARTINEAU.

O MIGHTY preacher, heretic and saint,
Who liftest high thy soul above the fog
Of creed and ritual and the Cimmerian bog
Of dogma in whose quicksands strong men faint,
How hast thy soaring spirit 'scaped the taint
Of a material creed and risen to heights sublime,
O'erleaping the strong fence of space and time
In bold attempts the ways of God to paint?

Such strength is given by Him who knows all hearts,
Who sets for each the limits of his scope,
Who hath endowed thee with a prescience rare,
To see things as they are, in whole, not parts,
And filled thee with the love and faith and hope
Of those who feel the Master's special care.

Seekers After God.

STANLEY AND KINGSLEY.

I LOOKED toward Zion with uplifted eyes,
And saw upon its height that wondrous shrine,
Built for his God by Solomon the Wise,
Fit dwelling for Jehovah, Lord divine !
On stone and cedar golden bucklers shine,
But most of all its stately portal caught
My rapt attention and reverent thought,
With two grand pillars of inspired design.

I looked again, but this time with the eye
Of faith that gazed upon a fabric fair,
Built by the spirit ; pillars twain were there,
“Established—strong”—“wisdom and charity ;”
Upon their front this legend, “These endure,
Stanley and Kingsley make the saying sure.”

Pilgrims of the Cross.

BISHOP PATTISON.

ON the further verge of this vast round world
In the waste of waters, realm of the wave,
Lie dreamy isles on its bosom impearled,
Where the billows surge and the strong blasts rave.
For a myriad years they have been the grave
Of races forgotten, unshriven, unblest ;
But a hero said, "they have souls to save,"
And went with the cross on his dreary quest.

He planted the blistered blood-stained rood,
And, watered with tears, it grew and spread
Like the fronds of a palm, and the storms withstood ;
But the tempest fell on the good man's head
As he prayed and toiled without surcease,
Till the Lord, through martyrdom, gave release.

Seekers after God.

REV. B. M. PALMER, D. D.

FOR fourscore years he trod this mortal earth,
Unsoiled by touch with all its devious ways ;
So good men loved his genius and his worth
And freely gave him honest meed of praise ;
And thus he rounded out his length of days
In usefulness and honor. So he became
The guide of souls lost in life's tangled maze ;
But still his work was in his Master's name,
Willing to bear for Him the cross of shame.
With potent teaching his winged words went wide,
Searching the hearts of men as with a flame ;
And as he told how Jesus lived and died,
On seraph's pinions his rapt spirit soared
And o'er the world its holy influence poured.

Pilgrims of the Cross.

TO SOPHIE.

On the Dedication of the Chapel of the H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College.

TWO mighty angels of the Lord of Hosts
Swept to our earth from realms beyond the sky,
Fulfilling thus the service of their posts,
Homeward a saintly soul to bear on high ;
Their names were Life and Immortality.
The angel Life saith, "Here they call me Death,
And when Life comes to souls, men say they die,
And thou, too, art with them a passing breath."

"This is not right," the other angel saith,
"The soul that soars to Heaven should still abide
On earth till time shall end, and Life, called Death,
Shall over sin and pain victorious ride,
Its influence pouring in a love divine
On human hearts that hold it as a shrine."

Seekers After God.

DIVES AND LAZARUS.

IN royal purple and fine linen clad
Dives sat in his lordly banquet hall,
And wallowed in his wealth, and thought that all
Was gathered there that can the heart make glad;
And from his table to a beggar sad
There fell some crumbs as he lay at the gate,
Sick, sore and bruised, in body and estate —
Then the world passed, and each his portion had.

And Dives, thirsting, looked from nether hell
To where in Abram's bosom Lazarus lay
In peace and comforted, and fell to pray
And make his plaint and all his woes to tell.
Then Abram answered, "Son, thou hadst thy part,
And now this poor one must lie next my heart."

Pilgrims of the Cross.

DIVES-LAZARUS.

TALL marble columns, plaques of malachite,
Things wrought in ivory, fabrics for each whim,
Broad acres, steeds that mock the arrow's flight,
And white-sailed ships deep laden to the brim
Or built for pride o'er summer seas to skim,
Riches in all its forms, to use or waste,
Are Dives', and their glitter shed on him ;
They throng and urge him pleasure's cup to taste.

Unto his well groomed body, cleanly shaped,
He says, "O body, thou art sound and whole,"
Then whispers to a Something darkly draped,
"But thou, O secret, wretched, leprous soul,
Canst thou win back by all this store of wealth,
One hour, one moment, of the breath of health?"

Seekers After God.

THE FORGOTTEN SAINTS.

THROUGHOUT the long procession of the ages,
The seekers after God in pain have striven,
And saints have suffered, and to wistful sages
A glimpse of truth eternal has been given.
Like those rare sentries in the vault of heaven
That make it luminous with shining rays,
The Pleiades, the sacred sisters seven,
Sirius and splendid Arcturus, these blaze ;
Meanwhile, a multitude, in tangled maze
Of starry systems, link their astral shields
And crowd in nebulous ranks the Milky Ways,
Or rove, unnoted, interstellar fields.
So men revere the peerage of the past
Nor heed the light by lowly sainthood cast.

Pilgrims of the Cross.

SAINTS OF TO-DAY.

WE are encompassed in our daily round
By a vast multitude, a mighty throng,
A cloud of witnesses, whose souls the song
Of praise to God utter without a sound,
In whose pure hearts trust, hope and love abound,
Whose instant prayers ascend on noiseless wings,
Whose proof of faith in secret alms is found,
The sacrifice claimed by the King of Kings.
Who are these saints that wear no earthly crown
Of glittering gems, or yet more royal thorns?
No outward sign of holiness adorns
Their plain humanity; in field or town
They move unseen save by the Sleepless Eye
That reads all hearts—the Conscious Destiny.

Seekers After God.

TO A SAINT ON EARTH.

MEEK Mary, thou hast chosen the better part ;
Then why dost thou cumber thyself with cares ?
The great world thou livest in onward fares,
In spite of the burdens laid on thy heart ;
That world will wag on though thy conscience start
For fear that thy work is not fully done ;
And yet thou art busy from rise of the sun
In deeds for others in temple and mart.
Thy hands are apt and thy will is strong,
Thy mind is alert and thou dost not shun
Toil for thy fellows ; the good work begun
By thee to the end must be carried along.
'Tis thus that the web of the world is spun
By a Mary and Martha joined in one.

Pilgrims of the Cross.

TO A SAINT IN HEAVEN.

ALONG sequestered paths her spirit trod,
And shunned the highway and the world's hot glare ;
You knew her for a chosen child of God,
Who breathed His graces as her native air,
But ne'er forgot her Father's loving care.
Erect in soul before her fellow man,
Her high born dignity bent down to share
Each common woe that mars life's rounded plan.
The oil of gladness in her hand she bore
And poured it as a balm for every wound,
And lightened every fellow sufferer's lot ;
So grateful eyes saw in her garb no spot,
But angel's vestments, and beheld her crowned —
But I — shall I see her loved face no more ?

Part Second.

The Absolute.

The Cry of Faith.

The Cry of Faith.

“The Heavens declare the glory of God ;
And the firmament sheweth his handywork.”

— *Psalm xix.*

“For I will consider thy heavens, even the works of
thy fingers ; the moon and the stars which thou hast
ordained. What is man that thou art mindful of him ?
And the son of man that thou visitest him ? Thou madest
him lower than the angels, to crown him with glory and
worship.”

— *Psalm viii.*

“If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done
amiss, O Lord, who may abide it ?”

— *Psalm cxxx.*

“Praise him, sun and moon ;
Praise him, all ye stars and light ;
Kings of the earth and all people ;
Princes and all judges of the world.”

— *Psalm cxlviii.*

THE ABSOLUTE.

I.

I—I AM alone in the universe ; vainly
A foothold I seek in its void and its vastness
Unless there be One whose Being enfolds me.
What staff or support hath the soul here to lean on ?
What stay for the spirit that flags in its flight ?
What rest for the body and brain in the struggle ?
What refuge for man when the hour arriveth
That closes the gate on his dreaming forever ?
Can friend, child, or wife, or his sore stricken father,
Or the mother that bore him arrest the dread mandate
That summons him back to the black vast oblivion
Which wraps the creation and all of its children ?
Do we know, can we see, will our groping and peering
Reveal to us aught of the vision beyond it ?

The Absolute.

One answer alone can give us assurance,
Bring rest to the heart and peace to the spirit ;
Faith in the All-Father, trust in our Creator,
Who planned in His Infinite Wisdom our being,
Who guards all our goings, with goodness omniscient,
Granting goodness, not woe, as man's portion forever.
If man sin, if he falter and fail in the conflict,
And baffled, defeated, o'erthrown in the combat,
Lies stretched where the sand of the world's mad arena
Soaks his blood and his tears, and, lowering o'er him,
Dark Nemesis frowns, he may still trust the Ruler,
Whose infinite wisdom and justice and mercy
Have ordered the contest with purpose unfathomed ;
Who will pluck the poor wretch from the depths of his
sorrow.

I will trust ; I will worship ; I will bend the strong pinions
Of my mind, heart and soul to find my Redeemer,
With mine eyes to behold the Lord who delivers,
The Saviour who ransoms and rescues the vanquished.

Seekers After God.

THE ABSOLUTE.

II.

WHENCE came He, the Maker of earth and
of heaven,
Creator of all things, immanent, abiding,
The Ruler, the Reason, the Process Eternal,
Who sways constellations, yet dwells in the atom?
Before time and space and beyond human thinking
And in the beginning was the Father Almighty,
Self existent and acting in conscious creation ;
And One with the Father was the Word Uncreated,
Who reveals to the finite the Infinite Thought.
The heavens declare God's glory and goodness,
And the firmament showeth the work of His hands ;
For its arch He hath builded with splendor supernal,
And with His crown jewels its portals emblazoned

The Absolute.

And His meteor banners stream through the expanse.
Suns and planets speak to us in praise of their Maker,
And the spheres chime together in time's morning hymn ;
Their voices are those of His ministering angels,
With messages meant for the children of men.
But forth from His Godhead a beam more transcendent
Came with reason to illumine the eye of the mind
And teach it to read the vast volume of nature,
Wherein may be spelled in the scroll spread above us,—
The primer, the horn-book, of Absolute Power—
The lessons God's finger hath traced for His sons.
There man learns that suns and their satellites blazing,
The lamps of the darkness and lamps of the day,
Are more than the pledges that lovers plight troth by,
Or the flambeaus that brighten the wayfarer's path,
Than the mariner's guide, or the soothsayer's fetich ;
They are symbols and proof of an order divine.
Their hosts, as unnumbered as flakes of the snowdrift,
With the mystery of beauty have nourished men's souls ;

Seekers After God.

Yet through ages on ages and aeons past counting
They have moved to the rhythm of unfailing law.
Yea, mighty beyond man's conception or vision
Is the swing of the stars in the cosmic procession,
As they march in their courses forever and ever.
Great worlds with a bulk so supreme, so tremendous,
Our earth shrinks before them to an atom of dust ;
Star-clusters arranged in superb constellations,
And nebulous wings of world systems o'erthrown,
Taking flight from the fields where chaos hath conquered ;
What are these but gems in the hem of His garment,
The fringe of His robe in the trail of the Glory
That envelops the Infinite Reason and Force ;
Sparks, scintillations in the process of motion,
By which to His creatures the Absolute Spirit
Maketh manifestation of kinship and love ?
Sing, sing, O ye stars, in a symphony choral,
And in harmony harp forth the music of spheres,

The Absolute.

And man, thou poor mite, frail, faulty and fleeting,
Yet heir to the Highest and crowned an immortal,
Self conscious, triumphant in the love of the Father,
Rise and soar as thy soul resounds with God's praise !

